

(Apostolic Fathers)

Hermas

b. The Shepherd of Hermas...a pastoral work by Hermas, early Christian mystic in the area of Rome about the close of the first century AD and thereafter. The work is a work of visions and discussions with angels and heavenly emissaries. It is chiefly directed against the problem of sin and the overall thrust is that post-baptismal sin is ruinous. Some have associated the name Hermas with the reference in Romans 16:14 but this seems doubtful (to me). It is an unique book and again went through much discussion as to its character before it was completely set aside as a non-inspired book. There are many parable settings in Hermas and you have to read it yourself for fuller discussion. It is a long book but very interesting and if you begin it, you will find it necessary to complete it.

Clement

c. The Letters of Clement of Rome...two are counted in the Apostolic Fathers but only the first is thought (my most) to be original. Clement is in the early second century and may be the man referred to in Phil. 4:3 but no one knows. The letter is addressed to the Corinthian community and it makes much use of Scriptural citations while advising the church to be in proper subordination to the Scriptures. Many date the letter in the last decade of the first century, incidentally, and it may well be the earliest extra-biblical writing we have.

Polycarp

d. Polycarp...martyred saint of 156 AD but who was a very old man at the time...born no later than 69 AD and a disciple of John. He was bishop of Smyrna and had written a letter for the Philippian church. As with many similar letters, it pleads for order and growth. It shows the priestly work of Christ in capsule form and gives a summary of the attitude of the devoted towards the Saviour.

Papias

e. Papias ...another of John's men who died about 140 AD and prepared a work "The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord" which is known only in fragment form. It shows us rather a "beginning" of the commentary movement that would soon produce a wealth of material. His fragment is the one telling us of the supposed Aramaic original of Matthew.

Ignatius

f. Ignatius...bishop in Asia Minor and a martyr between the years 111 and 118. He has left us seven extant letters written to churches in Asia Minor in the manner of the Apostle Paul. His emphasis on order suggests that one of the first doctrinal problems faced in the church was that of polity and practice.

The Apostolic Fathers help us to see the esteem